

*For the Southern Press.*

The present situation of public affairs is such as to arrest the attention of the most indifferent. As the prosperity of every citizen depends upon that of his country, an enlarged selfishness, if no his individual interest, should induce a consideration of public affairs at this time. It is the duty of every citizen at this season of danger, to lend his aid, to work the ship of State through the perils by which she is surrounded. Politicians have brought her into the shoals, and she is now only to be saved by the steady and unflinching conduct her through. I hold it to be proper then that every citizen, who has an opinion, upon the subject, should give it to the public; that in the suggestions of various minds the truth may be elicited, and the wisest policy pursued. Under this impression, I propose to turn aside from other considerations on the present condition of things. I am no politician; I abhor the scramble for the spoils which is dignified with the name of politics. I am neither a democrat, nor a whig. I have no party, and I have no sect. I am merely an observer of public affairs. I have no bias in any direction. I shall treat the subject in its general relations, in the abstract, as a whole.

I shall speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and I shall be unintentional. I solicit from my countrymen at the South, a dispassionate consideration of my views.

I propose to consider the object for which the Federal Government was established; the object which it has not attained; the causes of this failure; the remedy, if it there be a remedy within the Union, and if not, the remedy beyond the Union.

The object of the Federal Government, as of every other government, is the preservation of Protection without and protection within. Let any one turn this matter over in his own mind, and reflect carefully upon it, and he will see that the whole object of the Federal Government is, as I have stated, protection without and protection within, from external aggression, and protection within, from internal aggression.

There are certain fundamental rights, which require the protection of Government. Government exists to protect the rights of the citizen. The right of property, personal security, and personal liberty. If these receive protection, Government attains the end of its creation; if not, it fails to do so. Let us see how the Federal Government has attained its end.

As I have said, the object of the Federal Government is protection, external and internal. As regards the former, protection from external aggression, I admit that the Federal Government has failed. As regards the latter, I shall not lose any time on this point, but proceed at once to consider how the Federal Government has discharged its office of affording internal protection.

First, as regards the right of property. A large proportion of the property of the Southern States is the property of the Southern States, consists in slaves; and all other property at the South is intimately connected with, and dependent upon the value and stability of the slave property. The slave property cannot be destroyed in one way, without destroying all other property at the South; it cannot be destroyed without destroying all other property.

What has been the action of the Federal Government in regard to this peculiar property at the Southern States? It has prohibited the species of property was prohibited from being introduced north of a certain line. This was a direct attack by the Federal Government on slave property, and a protestation against the property rights of the Southern States, but slave property, if it meant these, it became forfeited; thus did the Government at that early day, express its sense of the validity and legality of this kind of property,—thus did it discriminate between good and bad property.

Furthermore, there has been for many years, a constant, and increasing agitation in Congress, upon the subject of slave property. The title and legality of no other kind of property is questioned, but slave property, by the Government, and its agents, is constantly being assailed. The very Government instituted for that purpose. The journals of Congress show that there is

more time spent upon this subject, than all other subjects put together. The Government instituted a plan of property, and the Congress proceeded to the consideration of all other matters in evincing its hostility to our property. To read the debates in Congress, one would imagine that he was reading the proceedings of an Abolition convention and this by the Government instead of Congress. They were constant and disturbing. Besides this agitation against our property, are entertained with favor by Congress : as the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the admission of new people from the conquered territories,—submitting to the vote of the people of the District of Columbia, including slaves and free negroes as voters, whether slavery should be abolished there,—abolition of slavery in every territory of the United States. And to crown the catalogue of enormities, it has even been proposed to enroll the slaves in the militia.

Besides, what the Federal Government has issued, does hostility to our property. The free States, portions of the confederacy, have proceeded to the most violent and hostile extremities against our slave property. They have carried on agitation systematically in every shape to the utmost, and have been endeavoring to deprive us of our property in slaves. They invited our slaves to run away, and when this has been done, they have refused to deliver them up, and prevented by violence their recapture in utter disregard of the rights of property. From this information that can be obtained, our actual monied loss in fugitive slaves has been at the lowest calculated at the rate of \$300,000 per annum for the last ten years. Take one case. A gentleman in Maryland was rewarded with a million of dollars, since, that in the last twenty years his father had lost thirty two negroes, fugitives to Pennsylvania. Look at the amount of rewards offered at this time in the Maryland papers, for the recovery of fugitives. The rewards are offered at the rate of \$30,000. These facts speak for themselves. Besides, encouraging our slaves to run away, the pe-

ple of the free States, some of them at least, have used every effort to excite our slaves to rebellion. And the free States have been the mistaken part of the confederacy formed to protect the very property, the object of their attack.

But it may be said that the Federal Government is not responsible for the action of the free States in their civil disobedience, and in considering whether the Government, the confederacy, the political partnership has answered its purposes, it is perfectly competent to show as I have done, that the members of the confederacy disregard the ends of the association, and fail to perform, and act in violation of the ends of the association. The Federal Government is the corporation of which the free States are members; if the members violate the objects of the corporation,—and the members of the confederacy do so,—in the case with the Federal Government in this regard, then the corporation has failed of its object, and the bad conduct of the members at variance with the purposes of the corporation, may be brought home to the corporation itself.

Therefore the hostile action of the people of the free States to the slave property of the South, is a just cause of complaint against the Federal Government.

And it cannot be denied that the action of the Federal Government and the free States is hostile to slave property; that the Government has done and is doing every thing to impair and destroy slave property—

And therefore it follows necessarily that the Federal Government has failed to afford protection to the property of the South; that so far from protecting the property of the South, it has declared war against it. Now what is the effect of this hostile policy of the Federal Government to slave property? Can any one who is a friend of the free capital, is that that shrinks from danger instinctively, doubt that the agitation of the slavery question has lessened the value of slave property? If so, he is not used to the pulse of the pulse of the country, the true political thermometer. A change of ministry, a birth, or a death, a victory or a defeat,

are visible in the rising or falling of the funds. From the moment Napoleon landed from Elba the value of property rose. The same is true. The history of a country may be read in the books of her public stocks. Property is proverbially true, the oversteering of a cart caused a run upon the Bank of England. If public funds are so sensitive to the temper of the people, how much more so how is it possible that slave property can do otherwise than fall in value from the attacks made upon it by the Federal Government. It has so fallen. Compare the price of slaves with their price in 1838, when the price of slaves was \$1000, now it is little higher than at the present time. Then negro fellows were worth from twelve to fourteen hundred dollars; now they are worth but about seven hundred dollars. The value of slaves is becoming insignificant; no one feared them: now they have become powerful; prudent men are alarmed.

Twelve years of agitation has reduced the value of slave property much more than any one imagines. I think it may be safely assumed, that the value of slave property in the South is diminished in value by the agitation on the subject, to the extent of at least fifty dollars a head. This may seem high, but I am satisfied, as an average, that under the same circumstances, the value of a white man, a free man, or a free colored man, is not less than that of a negro who has been a slave. I believe that the negroes who have been ac-

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